

# Michaux State Forest

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## 2016 MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY PLAN

The mission of DCNR Bureau of Forestry is to conserve the long-term health, viability and productivity of the Commonwealth's forest and to conserve native wild plants. One of the ways the bureau carries out this mission is through the [State Forest Resource Management Plan \(SFRMP\)](#), a document that guides the management of the 2.2 million-acre state forest system. The SFRMP is updated approximately every 5 years and includes an extensive public engagement process.

One of the policies in the bureau's strategic plan ([Penn's Woods: Sustaining Our Forests](#)) includes, "Public participation will be an integral part of the management of state forest lands." The purpose of this Management Activity Plan is to communicate to the public about upcoming management activities, projects, and events that will be conducted to implement the SFRMP on Michaux State Forest. This document will be revised at the start and middle of each calendar year to provide sufficient time for public review, questions, and feedback. The bureau is committed to considering the views and perspectives of the public and stakeholders and strives to accommodate public interests in planning management activities and decision making. We encourage comments or questions regarding planned or proposed activities be directed to the state forest district conducting the activity.

For questions, comments, or more information about this plan, please contact:

Roy Brubaker, Michaux District Forester  
Michaux State Forest  
10099 Lincoln Way East  
717-352-2211  
[Fd01@pa.gov](mailto:Fd01@pa.gov)

## RECREATION

- **Wildcat Trail Re-route.** Steep portions of the trail will be retired and less steep, more sustainable routes will be created. The entire project is being completed by volunteers.
- **Fuzzy Trail Re-route.** The fuzzy trail is part of the ATV trail system and is designated as a more difficult trail. A portion of the trail is very wet during the spring season and has deteriorated. This portion will be retired and relocated out of the wet area.
- **Installation of Mount Hope Parking Area and shared-use trail System.**
- A parking area will be created and the trail system will be marked. A map and brochure will be published for this area.
- **Update Designated Campsites.** A few designated campsites will be closed and relocated. Others are in need of minor refurbishment. The camping packet that we provide to the public will be updated as well.
- **Volunteer Work Days.** 3 to 4 volunteer work days will be scheduled in 2016.
- **Log Sled ATV Trail.** Improvements will be made to the trail tread along the log sled portion of the ATV trail system.
- **Update Trail Map.** The trail map of the southern portion of the Michaux will be updated and made into a brochure.

**2016 Organized Events:** The following events represent the approximate time frames of the larger, annually repeated events on the Michaux. There are many other organized events that take place on the forest on an annual basis so this list will be updated quarterly. If you would like more information about organized events occurring in any particular time-frame or location on the Michaux throughout the year, please contact the District office for more information.

**April:**

Mountain Bike Development Camp  
Odyssey Relay Running event  
Buck Ridge Burn Running event  
Iron Master's Challenge running event

**May:**

Michaux Maximus

**June:**

Iron Run  
Curse of Dark Hollow (mountain bike race)  
South Mountain Rangers (horseback ride)  
Pioneers Treks

**July:**

Pioneer Treks  
South Mountain Rangers (horseback ride)

**August:**

Michaux Off Road Enthusiasts Dualsport

**September:**

South Penn Enduro Riders Motorcycle Race

South Mountain Rangers (horseback ride)

Terror Of teaberry (mountain bike race)

**October:**

MTEC (adventure race)

## TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Marked and sold, potentially active Timber sale contracts are normally executed with a two-year timeframe to complete the harvest. The following state forest timber sales will most likely be in operation during 2016:

- Stargazer Sale – Sale is located on Ridge Road and Cold Spring Road north of Pine Grove Furnace State Park and adjacent to Kings Gap. Harvesting will occur during most of 2016.
- Rattlesnake Run Gas Line Sale – Sale is located east of Rattlesnake Run Road near the gas pipeline. Cutting will continue through most of 2016.
- Culp Ridge Sale – Sale near Mount Hope should be completed in spring or summer of 2016.
- Banty Rooster Sale – Sale is located on Ridge Road between Michaux Road and Route 233. Sale should be completed early in 2016.
- Michaux Oaks Sale – Sale is located on Ridge Road near High Mountain Road. Cutting began late in 2015 and should be completed early in 2016.
- Leaf Trail Sale – Sale is located near Pine Grove Furnace State Park off Leeper Farm Road along the Buck Ridge Trail and Leaf Trail. Haul road work began late in 2015. Cutting should be completed by spring or summer of 2016.
- Piney Mountain/Bendersville Road Sale – Sale was awarded late in 2015. Cutting may begin in 2016.
- Corls Ridge Sale – Sale is located off District Road and Coral Ridge Road. Sale was awarded late in 2015. Cutting may begin in 2016.
- Polk Hill Sale – Sale is located off Lindsay Lot Road. Sale was awarded late in 2015. Cutting may begin in 2016.

Marked but not yet sold:

- Dead Womans Hollow Sale – This 238 acre sale is located south of Ridge Road off Dead Womans Hollow Road near the Michener Cabin. Timber marking should be completed in early 2016. Prescribed burns and royer mowing will be incorporated with the sale as part of the Pitch Pine Scrub oak barrens restoration project (see habitat projects).
- Spruce Run Sale – This 415 acre sale is located north of Pine Grove Furnace State Park off Ridge Road in the northernmost part of the District. Timber marking should be completed in early 2016.
- Milesburn Road Sale – This 128 acre sale is located off Milesburn Road between Route 233 and Long Pine Reservoir. Timber marking should occur in spring or summer of 2016.

Proposed (not yet marked):

- Buck Ridge Sale – Sale is located at the intersection of Ridge Road and Cold Springs Road. Sale proposal should be submitted in early 2016. Timber marking could occur in the summer of 2016.
- Old Railroad Road Sale – This 182 acre sale will be located off Wenksville Road. Sale proposal to be completed in early 2016 with timber marking to occur in the summer of 2016.

- Devil Alex Sale – Sale is along Stillhouse Hollow Road, north of Sandy Sod. Sale proposal should be submitted in early 2016.
- Newman Road Sale – Sale is located east of Newman Road. Sale proposal could be submitted sometime in 2016.

Regeneration projects:

DEER FENCES:

- No deer fences are planned for installation this year. Fewer fences have been required recently, partly due to reduced deer impact on tree regeneration.
- Dark Hollow Fences – Two deer fences along Stillhouse Hollow Road near Dark Hollow Vista will be removed from 129 acres. Fences were installed in 2010, and tree regeneration has successfully established in these areas.

TREE PLANTING: These areas will be planted by contractors in the spring of 2016:

- Deer Lick Sale – 50 acres off Rattlesnake Run Road will be planted with 4000 chestnut oak, 3000 white pine, and 3000 pitch pine seedlings.
- Chapel Sale - 27 acres north of Pine Grove Furnace State Park off Black Swamp Road will be planted with 3000 pitch pine seedlings.
- Canada Hollow Sale – 156 acres will be planted with 11800 red oak, 12300 chestnut oak, and 15200 pitch pine. This area is near the intersection of Ridge Road and Means Hollow Road.

*Other sales or projects could potentially occur in 2016, but forecasting all activity is difficult due to various reasons. We will periodically update this section throughout the year as additional timber management activities are confirmed as operational priorities.*

## RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- **Dead Woman's Hollow Barrens Restoration Project:**  
**Royer Treatment** – This Royer Treatment will be conducted on approximately 117 acres of Scrub/shrub and pitch pine barrens. By mowing this area, we will be able to remove all over and mid-story trees with a diameter of less than 5", as well as competing vegetation such as mountain-laurel. Scrub oak responds favorably to this type of treatment, and will regenerate quickly once mowed. Furthermore, mowing to increase sunlight and homogenize fuel loads will widen the prescribed burn window in this treatment block which is needed to restore this fire dependent habitat type.
- **Special Wildlife Management Areas (SWMAs)** –During the early 90's, a severe decline in the wild turkey population was very prevalent on the Michaux State Forest. Due to the population decline, the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry defined that ideal turkey habitat for brood-rearing was one of the reasons for the decline. In response the Michaux State Forest, through funding provided by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), established and manages 43 herbaceous wildlife openings across the forest. Current efforts involve rejuvenating these areas to diverse mix of native grass, wildflower, shrub, and tree species that provide year around food and cover for game and non-game species. The following are priority projects for 2016:  
**SWMA #40 Big Flat, SWMA #19 Deer Lick, SWMA #36 Sand Road and SWMA #20 Corl's Ridge Road** will be rejuvenated and seeded to native warm season grass and

wildflower mix and planted with native fruit and mast bearing shrubs and trees.  
**Autumn olive removal** on SWMA #5 Menallen Township, SWMA #13 Wildcat Hill and

SWMA #10 Three Turn Road

**A basal bark (herbicide) treatment** will occur during late summer 2016 for Autumn olive on SWMA #5 Menallen Township

**Site prep for rejuvenation** of SWMA #40 Big Flat, SWMA # 19 Deer Lick Trail, SWMA #36 Sand Road, and SWMA #20 Coral Ridge Road began in late August 2015 for seeding/replanting in spring 2016.

**SWMAs South of Route 30** will be mowed fall 2016 to prevent woody vegetation establishment.

- **Glatfelter American Woodcock Habitat** - The American woodcock is listed as a species of greatest conservation need by the Pennsylvania State Wildlife Action Plan. Woodcock are dependent on early successional and shrubland/grassland habitats, which are in decline. The Glatfelter tract provides areas already being utilized by both resident and migratory woodcock. For the past two years the district has been monitoring woodcock populations in order to establish a baseline from which to monitor the impact of habitat improvement efforts. In 2015 we began the first stages of habitat improvement with an herbicide treatment to address the Japanese honeysuckle and other invasive species that are outcompeting native scrub/shrub species. An adjacent 20 acre site will have a royer treatment, where the primary goal is to create early successional habitat for the American woodcock.
- **Tom's Run Dam Removal and wetlands restoration** - Continued from 2015, this project will breach the lower dam on Tom's Run to improve brook trout and vernal wetlands habitat while also investing in capturing and interpreting the historic use of the waterway during the early days of the Conservation Corps era. Planning and design work will continue in 2016 on the upper Tom's Run dam to ascertain optimum alternatives for both in-stream brook trout habitat improvement and historic preservation and interpretation.
- **Other Habitat Projects** - The Michaux, in partnership with others within DCNR, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and other local conservation partners also conducts a number of ongoing habitat monitoring and restoration projects throughout the year. These include microsite habitat manipulation for species of special conservation concern such as timber rattlesnake, spotted turtle, Allegheny chinquapin, native eastern lupine as well as monitoring and seed collection for protection and propagation of representative and high value tree and shrub species representative of the Michaux's forest habitat types.

## ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

### 2015 Projects Completed

- Paver placed and rolled DSA on 0.7 miles of Ridge Road in Cumberland County Southampton Township for dust abatement.
- Paver placed and rolled DSA on 1.2 miles of Wirt Road in Franklin County, Quincy Township for protecting the water quality of Vineyard Run which is a HQ stream.
- Graded 114 miles of state forest road.
- Road side mowing of approximately 50 miles of state forest road using mechanized equipment.
- Used 3-three point hitch debris blowers to clear leaves and limbs from our road side ditches along 85 miles of state forest road to help facilitate proper road drainage during spring snow melt.
- Installation of a large diameter corrugated metal pipe on Furnace Hollow Road in Franklin County, Southampton Township. This project was designed by FDC.
- Worked with the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies to refurbish underground drainage structures and resurface 3000 feet of Three Turn Road in Cumberland County, Southampton Township.

### Projects Planned for late 2015-2016

- Paver place and roll DSA to approximately 1.0 miles on Oak Road in Franklin County, Quincy Township primarily for dust abatement but also road resurfacing. Time frame April-June30
- Paver place and roll DSA to approximately 1.2 miles on Milesburn Road in Adams County, Franklin Township for road resurfacing. Time frame April-June 30
- Apply 2600 tons of 2RC limestone to Birch Run Road in Adams County, Menallen Township for resurfacing. Time frame April – June 30.
- Build shooting stations and target holders at the target range.
- Continue to refurbish our building infrastructure with priority projects including roofing repairs on Old Forge buildings, staining, and new signage installed at Old Forge Picnic area and various parking lots and trailheads.

- Demonstration road projects in partnership with PSU’s Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads program include refurbishing and redesigning base and water management on Irishtown road, DSA placement on District and resurfacing Carbaugh Run Roads, and fixing soft areas on 2015 Wirt road DSA project.

## PRESCRIBED FIRE

- **Dead Woman’s Hollow Prescribed Burn:** This prescribed burn is located off of Ridge Rd., between Dead Woman’s Hollow Haul Rd, and Tumbling Run Game Preserve. This project consists of approximately 500 acres, which is broken into separate burn units ranging from about 60 acres up to 130 acre burn units. This project is aimed at rejuvenating the Pitch Pine, Scrub/Shrub barrens ecosystem that historically existed across this landscape. Furthermore, this project will also consist of special management geared towards creating critical grouse and woodcock breeding, nesting and foraging habitat. These burns may occur between mid-April – November. This area will continually have prescribed burns every 5 – 15 years to maintain the pitch pine, scrub/shrub forest type.
- **Knarly Maple Burn:** This Prescribed burn is located inside a 20 acre deer fence, at the intersection of Wirt Rd. and Oak Rd. The estimated time we look to conduct the burn will be mid to late April into mid-November. The goal of this prescribed fire is to reduce the undesirable tree saplings and release the existing oak that is established in the fence.
- **Hayes Run II Prescribed Burn:** This prescribed burn is located off of Old Forge Road, just west of the Waynesboro Reservoir access road. The burn will be conducted inside a 40 acre deer fence. The estimated time we look to conduct the burn will be mid to late April into mid-November. The goal of this prescribed fire is to release desirable oak regeneration and reduce the thick duff (leaf) layer. This will create a better seed bed for future acorn crops, allowing those acorns to germinate and become established oak seedlings.
- **Special Wildlife Management Openings; Gilbert Fegley (SWMA #14), Big Flat (SWMA #27), Rattlesnake Run Rd (SWMA #21):** These prescribed burns consist of burning small grass wildlife openings. The purpose of these prescribed burns are to reduce the thick thatch layer that is forming, remove woody vegetation from the openings, and help promote and rejuvenate the warm season grass components. This prescribed burn will occur between March and May.

## INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- Aerial survey flight(s) will be conducted in late June/early July to detect large scale insect and/or disease areas. Gypsy moth is most often the insect detected with the flights on the Michaux.
- Gypsy moth defoliation is not expected to be a problem this year on the Michaux. However,

- populations are on the increase in parts of the state where spray programs are planned in 2016.
- Ash trees are expected to die within a few years in the district due to the Emerald Ash Borer. Ash trees that were treated in 2015 to protect them from the borer will be monitored for their health in 2016.
  - Japanese barberry in the Pine Grove Furnace State Park will be sprayed again in spring 2016, as a continuation of the herbicide spray that began in spring 2015. Areas to be treated are mostly to the north and east of Old Shippensburg Road to Cold Springs Road. Glyphosate (Roundup) and 2,4-D are the herbicides to be used. Blue dye may be added to aid in proper coverage of an area.
  - Control efforts for invasive plants will continue in 2016. Mile-a-minute is treated mostly in recent timber sale areas to control the plant until tree regeneration grows tall enough where the plants will no longer inhibit the seedlings. Weevils have been released in several locations to assist in controlling the mile-a-minute and are now spreading on their own throughout much of the district. The weevil release sites are surveyed three times per year. Japanese knotweed treatments will continue in several small areas in the district. Japanese Angelica Tree is the most recent invasive that is a major concern. Areas in the southern Michaux are invaded most severely. Any Japanese angelica trees found to the north of the village of South Mountain will be targeted with herbicide.
  - Monitoring and eradication of invasives at plant sanctuary and other other sensitive habitat areas will continue both through Landscape exams and through partnership with Ecological services and other conservation entities with interests in these sites.

## **GAS, OIL AND OTHER GEOLOGICE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

- The Michaux does not have any Natural Gas projects. No pipeline right-of-way projects are known at this point for 2015.

## **TOWER AND RIGHT-OF-WAY PROJECTS**

- No tower or right of way projects planned in 2016

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

- **Michaux Target Range Structure Completion and Reopening.** Excavation and earthmoving on the new target range was completed in 2015. District crew will be building shooting stations and additional components late winter 2016 with the intent to open sometime early in the year.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Trail work Volunteer Days:** We will be holding at least four volunteer trail work days in 2016. We will update this plan as those dates are finalized and promote them through the local press and through the South Mountain partnership.
- **Graffiti clean-up** at Hammond's Rocks, Buzzard Rocks, and Pole Steeple. In partnership with Pennsylvania Parks and Forestry Foundation, Michaux Forestry Association, Friengs of Pine Grove State Park, Yellow Breeches Outdoor School, Maryland Mountain Club and other volunteers; four volunteer days have been allocated to cleaning graffiti off of numerous vista and rocky outcropping sites on the Michaux. Increased volunteer surveillance and monitoring have also lead to numerous citations at these sites.
- **Target Range Information Meeting:** A public information meeting will be held in January 2015 to provide local stakeholders opportunity to review range design and management, permit administration, and monitoring proposals once the range is operational.
- **State Forest Habitat Tours:** District staff provide an overview of state forest goals and activities designed to provide both the general public and various stakeholder groups better understanding of the social and ecological goals that drive our management priorities and activities on the forest. We can conduct up to four of these a year for parties of twenty-thirty people. Tours generally run from 8am-1pm unless more time is desired by the requesting audience. 2 month minimum lead time in requesting a tour is desired.
- **Q&A with Michaux Staff:** We try to make ourselves available for education and communication purposes on a day-to-day basis. If you have a question or concern about what is going on in the Michaux or would like more in-depth understanding about how and why we do what we do, please contact the district office for more information and you will be put in touch with the content expert most relevant to your needs.
- **Partner with our Partners:** You can become more engaged in the work on the Michaux through partnering with groups that partner with us. While the forms of local organizational support for work on the Michaux would be too large to list here, a couple key groups bear special mention as ones that will help you find meaningful ways to contribute meaningfully to work on the Michaux. These include the **South Mountain Partnership, Pennsylvania Parks and Forestry Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, Trout Unlimited, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Mountain Bikers of the Michaux, South Mountain and Conococheague Audubon Chapters, Pennsylvania Fire Wardens, and the DCNR Volunteer program.** If you would like to know more about one of these or other organizations that work with us on a day to day basis, please call the office.

## RESEARCH

- The Michaux coordinates habitat priorities and work with various research entities conducting ongoing monitoring and research on Michaux species and habitats. A short list of ongoing research on the Michaux with the potential to influence our management activities and priorities includes work being done on the following species or habitats: Timber Rattlesnake, Northern Bulrush, Pitch-Pine Scrub oak barrens moth species, Eastern Lupine, Spotted turtle, Shortleaf pine, Spadefoot toad, Eastern bog turtle, American woodcock, and Wild Turkey
- The Michaux is also cooperating with PSU on a study to monitor the effort and satisfaction of hunters utilizing Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) tags on the Michaux as part of our enrollment and monitoring strategy for utilizing DMAP within our management context.

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- **Wild Cat Trail reroute** Over fifty volunteers together with Recreation forester Michelle Blevins, Ranger Todd Ottinger, and forester Keith Ewan constructed nearly 2,000 ft of this 3,000 ft reroute in 2015.
- **Three Turn Road Restoration project.** Lifting this section of sunken state forest road through a partnership with the Dirt and Gravel Roads Center was a major project undertaken in an already busy spring season.
- **Successful prescribed burn season.** 2015 more than doubled the number of prescribed burn acres from previous years. While conditions were marginal for the one burn, all were conducted safely, we learned a lot, and we will learn more over the coming years how much we accomplished on Hayes Run even under suboptimal conditions.
- **Target Range Clean up and Excavation.** Marking the end of a five year decision making process, completing the range clean-up and excavation/construction phase was a major accomplishment in 2015.